



## Language Access Services

### *Frequently Asked Questions for Contract Court Interpreters*

#### **What happens when OLAS receives my monthly invoices?**

Invoices for Spanish and LOTS (languages other than Spanish) interpreters are first received by OLAS. Upon receipt of monthly invoices (AOC-A-215) and corresponding daily logs (AOC-A-216), OLAS staff will:

- 1) Date stamp the invoice to reflect the date invoice is received by OLAS;
- 2) Confirm that the interpreter was scheduled by the LAC by referencing LAC calendar;
- 3) Thoroughly review the documents to check for accuracy and completeness;
- 4) Enter invoice data into a spreadsheet to track expenditures and analyze workflow;
- 5) Scan all invoices and supporting documentation;
- 6) Approve invoices for payment; and
- 7) Send invoices to the NCAOC Financial Services Division for processing and payment.

Once Financial Services receives the invoices, they must then process the invoices according to their payment procedures. *Please note: when invoices include out-of-court time for a Public Defender, Assigned Counsel, or Guardian Ad Litem those invoices undergo additional review by IDS (Office of Indigent Defense Services) or GAL staff.*

Payment of interpreter invoices involves a multi-step review process that can require up to 30 days from the date invoices are received by OLAS. While contractors may receive payment sooner than 30 days, please keep in mind that payments are not late if they are received within 30 days of receipt of a *properly completed* invoice.

#### **Why does it sometimes take longer for me to receive payment?**

When invoices are missing required documentation or not completed correctly, OLAS staff cannot complete review of the invoices until the contract interpreter resolves any questions or issues, thereby delaying payment. In the past, we have accommodated contractors by electronically or telephonically notifying them of errors in their invoices to avoid the delay that would be caused by mailing invoices back and forth for corrections. However, OLAS' efforts to accommodate those contractors whose invoices are not submitted correctly are adversely affecting the prompt processing of those contractors whose invoices are correctly completed.

**Therefore, effective January 1, 2014, OLAS ceased to extend this courtesy. Incomplete or inaccurate invoices will be returned to the contract interpreter with a letter identifying what corrections need to be made.** This will allow for more prompt processing of those invoices which have been submitted correctly. It is in the contractor's best interest to ensure that all daily logs and invoices are submitted completely and correctly.





In the event any minor corrections or adjustments are made by OLAS staff, the interpreter will be sent an email with a scanned copy of the invoice for future reference, with the understanding that invoices will be returned to the contractor if s/he continues submitting incomplete invoices.

To avoid delay in receiving payment, the contract interpreter must follow NCAOC billing procedures by completing invoices (AOC-A-215) and daily logs (AOC-A-216) according to the instructions provided on side two of each form. These forms are updated periodically to reflect expansion efforts, so it is important for contractors to use the most up to date version of the forms. Formulas have been embedded in the AOC-A-215 to allow for the calculation of hours worked based upon the contractor's entered hourly rate. Contractors are **strongly encouraged** to complete this form electronically to ensure accurate calculations of hours worked, travel time, and mileage. LOTS interpreters must, in addition, follow billing procedures listed on the Assignment of Interpreter or Agency form.

Common mistakes to avoid include: 1) missing signatures on daily log; 2) required fields left blank; 3) failure to properly separate in-court time from out-of-court time in different sections on the daily logs and obtain the requisite signatures for each; 4) failure to list case numbers, particularly for out of court time; 5) failure to accurately calculate hours worked and / or total amount due; 6) failure to properly transfer all hours from daily logs to the monthly invoice; 7) failure to enter travel time and mileage in a separate section on the daily logs; and 8) failure to have signature witnessed or notarized on monthly invoice.

Additionally, if invoices are sent to Financial Services first rather than directly to OLAS as indicated below, there will be a delay in OLAS' receipt and approval of invoices.

### **Where do I send my monthly invoices?**

Office of Language Access Services (OLAS)  
NCAOC  
PO Box 2448  
Raleigh, NC 27602.

If interpreters do not send their invoices as indicated above, payment may be delayed.

### **Who will pay me for interpreting services I provide in court?**

The Judicial Branch will provide a court interpreter, at state expense, in the following types of court proceedings:

- All criminal and civil proceedings heard before the Magistrate
- All proceedings heard before the Clerk of Superior Court
- All criminal and civil court proceedings heard before the District Court
- All criminal and civil court proceedings heard before the Superior Court





### **What is a court proceeding for purposes of payment by the NCAOC as listed above?**

A court proceeding is any hearing, trial or other appearance before any North Carolina state court in an action, appeal, or other proceeding, including any matter *conducted by a judicial official*.

- Child custody mediation sessions, child planning conferences, and permanency planning mediation sessions are considered district court proceedings for purposes of coverage. NOTE: Child planning conferences include both in-court time and out-of-court time for appointed counsel to meet with the respondent parent(s).

### **What if one of the parties needs an interpreter outside of the court proceeding?**

The Judicial Branch will provide an interpreter for out-of-court communications on behalf of the district attorney, Guardian ad Litem Program, and, pursuant to a memorandum of understanding between NCAOC and the Office of Indigent Defense Services (IDS), on behalf of public defenders, assigned counsel, and Guardians ad litem representing indigent parties for IDS at IDS expense. The court interpreter should mark these services under the appropriate **Out of Court** section on the daily log and invoice, and obtain the required signature of the authorized attorney or GAL.

### **What services am I prohibited from including on my NCAOC invoicing paperwork?**

The Judicial Branch does not provide interpreting services to facilitate communications between private counsel and clients, witnesses, or other parties *outside of the court proceeding*. Language access services required for all out-of-court communications involving private counsel, including all interviews, investigations and other aspects of general case preparation, and settlement conferences are outside the scope of services provided or funded by the Judicial Branch. Likewise, language access services required for out of court communication for the LEP person and other persons or agencies, such as law enforcement, criminal mediation agencies, private mediators and arbitrators, probation, and community corrections programs are outside the scope of services provided or funded by the Judicial Branch. Contract court interpreters must make private arrangements for payment in these situations.

### **What can I do to ensure that my time is used most efficiently when I arrive in court?**

The court interpreter should notify court personnel or the bailiff of his/ her arrival as soon as possible, without disrupting the court. If the court interpreter will be providing services to several courtrooms or must leave by a time certain, the court interpreter should also notify the court personnel or bailiff of this information.

For example, some court interpreters provide the clerk or bailiff with a piece of paper that says the court interpreter is present and available until a time certain; the notification can be placed on the judge's bench by the clerk or bailiff so that s/he will be aware of the interpreter's presence. In addition, the interpreter may ask the judge's or bailiff's permission to make an announcement to the audience (in both English and their language of expertise) to inquire if there is anyone who speaks Spanish or another language that needs an interpreter. The court interpreter can then make a list of the names of persons who raise their hand and give the list to the court official responsible for calling the calendar (usually the Assistant District Attorney for criminal calendars and the judge for civil calendars).





### **How do I request overnight travel accommodations?**

A contract court interpreter must submit a request via the ***Contract Court Interpreter Request for Preauthorization of Overnight Accommodations*** to OLAS, in advance of making travel arrangements, for approval of overnight lodging. Requests are approved on a case-by-case basis depending on factors such as travel distance and length of the proceedings. If a contract court interpreter does not submit a request form and receive approval from OLAS, and submit the approved travel request form with his/her reimbursement request, the interpreter will not be reimbursed for lodging.

### **Who do I contact with questions?**

You should always contact OLAS first with any questions you may have.

OLAS Main: 919-890-1407

OLAS Email: [OLAS@nccourts.org](mailto:OLAS@nccourts.org)

Website: [www.NCcourts.org/LanguageAccess](http://www.NCcourts.org/LanguageAccess)

